

PS 2809

.S78

Copy 1

# PRO POETA

AND OTHER POEMS.

WITH FIRST BOOK

OF

THE NEW COLUMBIAD.



# PRO POETA

AND OTHER POEMS WITH FIRST BOOK

OF

## THE NEW COLUMBIAD,

BY

WILLIAM SHERAN.

---

*Rise, resty Muse, my love's sweet face survey,  
If Time have any wrinkle graven there ;  
If any, be a satire to decay,  
And make Time's spoils despised everywhere.*

—SHAKESPEARE.



ST. PAUL, MINN.,  
PAYNE, VOSE & Co., PRINTERS,  
1891.

38439 Y'

PS2809  
S78

Copyright, 1890,  
By WILLIAM SHERAN.  
All rights reserved.



	PAGE.
ENTRANCE TO HELL.....	50
GOLD.....	45
HOPE.....	56
ILLUSIONS.....	49
ODE TO MORNING.....	39
ONLY A STAR.....	48
PRAYER.....	49
PRO POETA.....	5
THE MATERIALIST.....	54
THE MIDNIGHT HOUR.....	53
THE NEW COLUMBIAD.....	57
THE PAGAN HELL.....	41
THE PAST.....	47
TO-MORROW.....	40
VIA RECTA.....	46
WHAT WAS.....	40



# PRO POETA.

## I.

A willing tribute may we prize  
To him who pours his soul in song,  
Who looks with fancy's sleepless eyes  
On worlds where greater glories throng;

Whose heart with passion strong inwrought,  
Throbs with the pulse of human life,  
Now fierce, as swells the fevered thought  
And calm, when dies all hate and strife:

He lauds the record of the brave  
And true and good: he wars on wrong,  
And how the virtues lift and save  
Is made the burden of his song.

If swallow-like these variant lays  
But skim the ocean of his deeds—  
Enough, they try to speak his praise,  
For larger harvest sowing seeds.

## II.

How oft thy soul is borne along,  
    And made to feel a heavenly thrill  
While sunk in depths of some sweet song,  
    A captive to the poet's will.

It leaves our little earth behind,  
    Those narrow views so sadly real,  
So common to our human kind,  
    And enters on a world ideal.

There, nature blooms — all loveliness :  
    There harmonies forever blend :  
There, man, devoid of selfishness,  
    Moves forward to a joyous end.

And, lingering in that higher sphere,  
    Creation of a poet's pen,  
Thy soul finds not the grossness here,  
    Nor crime that stains the lives of men.



## III.

The bleak winds sigh thro' leafless trees  
And pile the blinding snow in heaps  
And shake the window pane and sieze  
With icy hand the noisy deeps.

Within, beside the glowing fire  
I trim the mid-night lamp, nor feel  
The rolling hours, my sole desire  
From poesy her sweets to steal.

No traveler wandering o'er the moor,  
Or waif on marble steps unsought,  
Or storm that forests scarce endure  
Can win from me a passing thought,

Until the thrilling numbers turn  
On some poor wretch who strayed and froze  
One winter's night, whom wealth would spurn,  
Should fate palatial homes disclose.

## IV.

A bloom is on the earth, the stream  
Sweeps gaily on to swell the sea,  
And nature from her winter dream  
Gives thousand proofs that she is free.

Aroused, she puts in shrub and flower  
A portion of her energy,  
And by kind heat and ready shower  
Decks field and garden, wild and lea.

No longer by the fire-side  
Sits horny-handed labor mute;  
The kine break into meads denied,  
And slumbering seeds find life and root.

Awake, O poet, now hath come  
The hour to pour thy soul in song—  
Woodland and meadow are in bloom  
Arouse, and move with life along.

## V.

At play upon the azure space,  
    Their shadows trailing o'er the lea,  
The thin, white cloudlets float apace  
    Like ships upon the dark blue sea.

The hills and valleys far below  
    Re-echo to the reaper's song,  
And woods are still and waters low:  
    The brook in silence steals along.

Embowered in a shady nook  
    Round which the woodland glooms, I lie  
And, turning from an open book,  
    I lift to heaven a wearied eye,

And marvel how poetic skill  
    Can reach the fibres of the heart  
And stir the depths of love and fill  
    The soul as if by magic art.

## VI.

'Tis autumn! woods are russet clad :  
A haze hangs over field and vale :  
The smile of summer sweet and glad  
Is gone: the drowsy stream looks pale

As if he dreaded winter's wand  
Would change him soon to icy coil,  
Hard by the plow in rustic hand  
Turns up again the hopeful soil.

Oh fading year, in dim old age  
What thoughts thou callest to the mind  
Of happier days, that brighter page  
Where youth has left its trace behind !

When passing from the eyes of men,  
Whose lasting honor will it be  
To linger by thy couch, and pen  
Immortal lines concerning thee?

## VII.

Has our age heroes? men who leave  
    Their impress on our life and state?  
Who in the strength of *acts* believe  
    And fight and win and laugh at fate?

Who now within the council hall  
    And now upon the gory field,  
Mid hissing tongue and cannon ball,  
    Cling to the right, their crown and shield.

For them the poet builds a song  
    In monumental epic tiers  
That rings through ages loud and long,  
    And fails not with the cycling years.

No monument of earth or stone  
    Presents to view such wondrous whole:  
They speak unto the eye alone,  
    The epic trances eye and soul.

## VIII.

At eve we see the slanting rays  
Speed their wild flight across the sky—  
The setting sun in spreading blaze  
Climbs cloudy summits far and nigh.

Now slowly comes a colder wave  
Of air around us, as we mark  
In the far west, as in a grave,  
The last faint streaks of day grow dark.

Did Homer view a grander sight  
While standing on the Grecian plain,  
Or think more beautiful to write  
Than when the sunbeams strive in vain

To combat 'gainst the dusky host  
That twilight summons from afar:  
Though strong the towers that guard their coast,  
Like Ilion once, they fall by war.

## IX.

Oh, love the poet, cherish not  
Those feelings that the world inspires,  
For in his lay hate is forgot,  
And coldness in his pure desires.

Could Shakespeare but re-live on earth  
(Though once has quite sufficed to show  
The poet's love and sterling worth)  
Who would not run to hear and know?

Who would not kneel and kiss the hand  
That wielded such a mighty pen?  
Thinkest thou, as stranger in the land,  
His life would pass unknown to men?

Learn then a lesson from that bard  
And melt the coldness that surrounds  
At least one heart by due regard  
To him whose harp for thee resounds.

## X.

But give me back my peace of mind,  
That peace I knew in childhood days  
Ere I had left young joys behind  
And entered upon sinful ways.

When into mead and wood I strayed  
And drunk the sweetness of the rose,  
And marked where light and shadow played  
Beneath the Oak and Birchen bows.

And if forbidden, let some song  
Give echo to that dear old past —  
Some roundelay whose words prolong  
It's pleasures, ah! too sweet to last.

Let gentle measures softly flow  
And speak the peace of childhood hours  
That ripe old age may hear and know  
How sadly sinful time deflowers.



## XI.

I linger now upon the beach  
Piled high with centuries of sand,  
And wish to know what waves can teach—  
Those waves that circle every land.

For ages they have swept the sea  
And dashed against resounding shores :  
For ages are they wild and free  
As an eagle when he heavenward soars.

Go find a tongue for these wild waves  
And change their sounds to eloquence ;  
For now they are like one who raves  
In maddened crowds devoid of sense.

Hark ! now I hear majestic roll,  
Not of the waves, but measured lines—  
They seem to catch the very soul  
Of which wave-dashings are but signs.

## XII.

Why these wild efforts to attain  
The beautiful in all, man tries?  
Is it a longing here to gain  
The loveliness that never dies?

It is a longing to express  
The myriad gleams of beauty caught  
From fonts above, all men confess  
It never can be theirs unsought.

And hence supernal beauty draws  
That daily effort of the soul  
To apprehend the final cause  
And mould its thought to perfect whole.

So marble speaks the sculptor's mind,  
And canvas glows from passion strong;  
But nowhere does this effort find  
Such true expression as in song.

## XIII.

We have but fragments of the truth,  
    Though in us lies a fierce desire .  
To grasp at all and be forsooth,  
    What pride angelic would require.

Yet, though in broken parts we deal,  
    Each is a triumph of some mind,  
And all united makes us feel  
    To human lot far more resigned.

The poet molds these thoughts anew  
    And stamps them with immortal die,  
Brings mental treasures into view  
    That else in dust and dark would lie.

And it is often true that he  
    Who does so much, has for return  
From human kind blank misery,  
    A cheerless home, a pauper's urn.

## XIV.

The lover on the new made grave  
Kneels pensive, now the bitter tear  
Steals down her cheek; no hand could save  
What she has held on earth most dear.

Oh God, her breaking heart would know  
Thy mercy in this awful hour!  
But grant a tongue to grief and show  
A kindly light through clouds that lour. .

What gentle numbers greet her ear  
As soft and soothing as the spell  
That music weaves when moonlight clear  
Sleeps on sea waves that sink and swell.

Her suffering spirit grows more calm;  
Some one has felt and told its woe;  
The wounded heart has found a balm,—  
Half reconciled she turns to go.

## XV.

The steel-grey light falls on the field,  
    Soon o'er the mountain climbs the sun ;  
Westward pale Shadow bears his shield;  
    Life beats again—day has begun.

But dark and dead as was the world  
    Before the brightening sunbeams came  
Were life, had love not backward hurled  
    Encroaching foes and put to shame.

The poet teaches purest love,  
    Not such as in the miser burns,  
Or in the breast of Caesar throve,  
    Or at the whim of party turns.

But such as rests with God alone  
    And binds creation unto him—  
Such as will stay when years have flown,  
    And e'en with death itself not dim.

## XVI.

The bird sings o'er me in the trees,  
Whose broad boughs mingle grateful shade:  
Tost lightly with the stirring breeze,  
The songster's nest hard by is laid.

The song is of the summer wood  
When labors of the spring are crowned,  
And man and beast find common good,  
In ripening treasures scattered round.

It wins the heart from ways of woe  
E'en though the senseless organs cloy.  
Oh friend, thou can'st not choose but go  
And hear the lay and share the joy.

I hear the answer made to me:  
Those wood-land songs are sweet and clear;  
But sweeter far is wont to be  
The song of poet to mine ear.

## XVII.

A dew drop on this violet

So bright and tiny here now shows  
The skies with stellar diamonds set,  
And all the beauty they disclose.

A perfect mirror is its eye

Of world on world that rolls above,  
Of countless systems circling by—  
All glories off-spring of God's love.

Poetic soul in miniature,

Thus types infinitude of truth,  
Of truth that must for aye endure,  
Rejoicing in perpetual youth.

Yes, truth that reaches far beyond

The soundings of the vulgar mind,  
E'er for the shallow parts more fond,  
Unskilled to see what lies behind.

## XVIII.

At eve the whitening vapor steals  
    Along the valley, up the lawn,  
And day-worn labor weary feels,  
    And sinks to rest till break of dawn.

I watch the mist as slowly o'er  
    The quiet vales it 'gins to rise,  
And thicken ever more and more  
    'Till sight of wood and hollow dies.

Just so oblivion might come  
    Like that dank vapor o'er the lea,  
When sound of busy life is dumb  
    And shroud our works eternally,

Were it not for poetic lay  
    Uprising as the dawning sun  
To drive oblivious clouds away  
    When earthly struggles will be done.



## XIX.

The greatest epics are unsung;  
The strongest love finds not a word;  
The noblest heart is often wrung  
With life amid a grovelling herd.

No marvel then, that one should hear  
A poet died in some drear lane  
Forgotten by the world,—its tear  
Would stain his grave, would fall in vain.

For should tears fall, no longer true  
To an old baseness would it be,  
Of its cold heart he felt—and knew  
Nor asks in death false sympathy.

Yet one, who loves the good, the brave,  
May twine a wreath of flowers there,  
May kneel beside that humble grave  
And for his spirit breathe a prayer.

## XX.

Why is it that poetic mind  
By some strange magic can endue  
Whatever it may see or find  
With fairest form and loveliest hue—

A beauty breaking everywhere,  
Be it of rill, or tree, or bird,  
Or wood, or mead—the good and fair  
Alone are seen, alone are heard.

His mind must teem with what it gives,  
As grain of musk with sweet perfume,  
Else in those mansions where it lives,  
The foul and fair would each find room.

Much like the gentle spring, its touch  
Brings out the fairer, brighter hue  
And lovelier form we prize so much,  
While shrouding that from which they grew.

## XXI.

Verse makers by the score are found  
Whose rhyming mocks the God-like art  
Of poetry ; this class abound  
And play a meaner, baser part

Than worthless rock that mountain high  
Wards entrance to the gold inside,  
As rocks, forsooth, will never try  
For what their nature has denied.

Yet jingling sounds in measure wrought  
May sometime catch the vulgar ear ;  
So their smooth words divorced of thought  
Will oft as poetry appear.

Buzz on, poor flies, soon Mother Age  
Must set tormented list'ners free—  
Then who will turn your musty page  
And read a graceless mimicry.

## XXII.

Our speech and thought so interweave  
Whoever moulds the first will show  
What we admire, hope and believe,  
What acts from mortal agent flow.

Yea more : he gives the soul a lyre  
More subtle than a syren's song,  
And by sweet love or fierce desire  
Its strings are wildly swept along.

This has the poet done since time  
Saw Adam from fair Eden driven—  
Truth by him is bound fast to rhyme,  
And every mortal under heaven

Sometime has known his thrilling lay  
And hope or love or pleasure caught ;  
And often felt quite borne away  
On swelling music of his thought.

## XXIII.

The poet does not prove : he stands  
    With hidden truth quite face to face :  
A doubtful creed alone demands  
    The philosophic knife and mace.

He looks into the human heart  
    And sees its inmost workings plain —  
All mysteries at once depart —  
    All carping logic is in vain.

And ever on to more and more  
    He bears wrapt souls until they see  
That higher goal, that farther shore  
    Where larger truth is known to be.

Beneath the surface does he go,  
    Behind the shifting mask of things  
Where firmly and immortal grow  
    The changeless truths of which he sings.

## XXIV.

What mighty magic plays around  
In sea and land and starry dome—  
Where'er you go is beauty found,  
A blushing glory where you roam.

Be it beside the tinkling rill,  
Or on the snow-capped mountain height,  
Or when the blushing mornings fill  
The dim air with their ambient light,

So, too, when evening shadows fall,  
And silvery rays steal from the moon  
On darkened nature—over all  
Is cast a beauty late or soon.

Imprint it on thy living lines  
Oh poet, that the world may know  
Thou read'st the great Magician's signs  
Thro' forms of matter here below.

## XXV.

Anid the flowers I now discern  
A humming bird in emerald coat ;  
Above their pure white petals burn  
The flecks of fire upon his throat.

Sweet songster of the flowery world,  
I hear thy charming melody  
While from its graceful knot uncurled  
Thy curving lance probes thievishly.

Much like the poet art thou there  
In wilderness of calm delights ;  
He glories in like sun and air  
And feeds his eye on beaoutous sights.

Likewise his thrilling notes are heard  
By those who toil in field beyond,  
And listening souls are ever stirred,  
And of his presence grow more fond.

## XXVI.

The poet teaches that our soul  
Has its true home in world's unknown ;  
Where waves of boundless yearning roll,  
Where all our larger hopes have flown.

He teaches that 'twill dwarf and pine  
When centered in gross earthly thought,  
That shadows round us here combine,  
And less than God is hardly aught.

You take exception to his word,—  
Poor sensual man in dust enrobed !  
You own not that which is not heard,  
You doubt what senses never probed !

But bear in mind our lot is cast  
Upon the shifting sands of time,  
And deathless life alone will last,  
And thought and hope and love sublime.



## XXVII.

To works that soonest will decay  
Great nature gives a hasty birth,  
But countless ages roll away  
In forming those of lasting worth.

Hence towers the mountain rock apace  
And points eternal to the sky  
While gross weeds at its rugged base  
Live with the year—as quickly die.

So genius in poetic realm  
Hath builded up immortal song,  
That rolling years may never whelm  
Though all else vanish as they throng.

How can it be? In vain you ask.  
Strange Genius cannot be defined—  
She ever wears an inviolate mask,  
Is more than time and skill combined.

## XXVIII.

The poet's song is not required  
For those who wallow in delights  
Of sense and vulgar gain: 'tis fired  
By nobler purpose and it fights,

That intellect may triumph o'er  
The sensual man and leave him free,  
That knowledge growing more and more  
Alone may have sweet mastery.

Upward to point and lead the way  
Toward realms of wisdom and of love;  
Onward to move where growing day  
Reveals dim glories far above.

Such is poetic task:—and none  
Can harmonize our love and thought  
So sweetly as the gifted one  
Whose swelling music comes unsought.

## XIX.

'Tis evening and the storm is o'er :  
Thro' cloud-rents break the deep-blue skies :  
Far eastward drives the wrack and roar :  
Slowly a western glory dies.

Beneath the slow-emerging stars  
I mark the wizard lightnings play —  
Dream-like they dance on cloudy bars  
Now fading in the gloom away.

The leaden vapors all are gone  
And purer air around me hies :  
I feel cold shadows creeping on :  
A soft wind in the tree-top sighs.

Oh poet, 'tis an hour for thee  
To keep thy golden harp in tune,  
Like yon sweet bird that merrily  
Carols unto the rising moon.

## XXX.

Now at my feet the ocean rolls :

Broad, boundless, free, its murmur charms.

In every clime e'en to the poles

Reach out its gray, embracing arms.

Move on, thou tossing element,

Bring sails unto the farthest shore,

Chafe sides of many a continent,

And grow in splendor more and more.

As broadly as thy vast expanse,

As deeply as thy sullen base,

Methinks I see poetic glance

Peer into secrets of our race,

And mists that shroud the form of truth,

And words that cloud the light of love,

And all the mysteries that youth

And age find here, below, above.

## XXXI.

Who 'neath the threats of man will cower,  
And drag an honest conscience down,  
And keep a creed to suit the hour  
Can never win th' immortal crown.

High may he be in wealth or rank,  
Proud to possess an envied name,  
Yet coming ages will be frank  
And heap on him a coward's shame.

Oh poet, if thy song would move,  
Let manly heart and purpose speak  
Thro' every line; else none can love,  
When it is known that thou wert weak.

In vain thy polished sentence rings,  
In vain thy voice cries out at sin,  
If all will say: 'tis thus he sings,  
But to live thus must yet begin.

## XXXII.

A brooding sorrow wraps me up  
In its dark folds; mine eyes are dim;  
I drank of fortune's bitter cup  
And now I feel my senses swim.

How dark the world around me now,  
And dark the ways of human life;  
Come night and scowl with sullen brow,  
Come hate and tell thy tales of strife.

I list to pride and pomp no more,  
Earth has no bauble that can claim  
Ambition's flight—her days are o'er,  
And leave me without hope or aim.

But sing to me thou gentle one,  
And make thy song a subtle thief:  
Oft hath the founts of helicon  
Brought to a sorrowing soul relief.

## XXXIII.

The poet gives the rill a tongue  
To whisper as it tinkles by,  
How flowers on its green sides hung  
All beauty of the mead defy.

Thro' him the mountain tells its years,  
How long the torrent on its side  
Wore down those massive rocky tiers  
Into the chasm gaping wide.

Thro' him yon cloud that rides asleep  
Upon the azure sea of heaven,  
Speaks softly of those stars that peep  
Behind it at the close of even.

Dead forms are vocal at his word,  
And mount and mead, and sea and sky,  
Speak out as if they saw and heard,  
And to our questions make reply.

## XXXIV.

The palsied hand is weak with age,  
It trembles in its last decay ;  
Cold powers of the grave now wage  
Successful war and steal away

The last sad hopes of lengthening years,  
The last sweet solace of life's woe ;  
Yet with a love too deep for tears,  
Is sung a song of the long ago.

Of the long ago when childhood chased  
The sunny hours in gladsome wood  
Around the haunts that time effaced,  
Amid the memory living wood.

All else is gone, the fruit and flower  
Of life is plucked and long since dead ;  
Yet song still cheers this gloomy hour,  
When all save life itself has fled.



## ODE TO MORNING.

Sweetly the bells of the morning are ringing  
Sweetly the birds on the tree-tops are singing--  
Day hath begun.

Over the mountain his bright banner beaming,  
Over the valley his golden light streaming,  
Comes the glad sun.

Now in the dew-drop his image is dancing,  
Now on the wave are his swift coursers prancing,  
Bright golden beams.

See how they furrow the east as they hasten,  
See with what skill they deshadow and chasten  
Pale drowsy streams.

Brim full of life these glide on to the ocean,  
And join in renewing to God a devotion  
Treasured above.

Waken, oh man, from thy death-like composure,  
Waken, oh waken, and pay with all nature  
Thy tribute of love.

## WHAT WAS.

As blind waves feel along a shore  
That curves within an ocean cave,  
So feel I for the things of yore  
Far back in time's dark vaulted grave.

A fruitless task: one looks in vain  
Amid the ruins of the past  
For what man toiled with so much pain—  
An empty grave-yard lone and vast.

## TO-MORROW.

How oft we speak this word, and hope to be  
Much nobler, purer, holier, than now!

Yet when to-morrow comes, alas we see  
No great advance: again to sin we bow,

And yield, the Tempter triumphs as before,  
And makes a mockery of good intent:  
'Twere better name to-morrow nevermore,  
Than it should close with this sad truth "ill spent."

## THE PAGAN HELL.

( VIRGIL, VI BOOK )

Aeneas, looking back, beheld to right  
Neath a huge boulder prisons vast, round which  
A triple wall looms up; encircling this,  
Tartarean Phelegeton rolls his swift waves  
Of torrent fire: against the sounding rocks  
He thunders, heaving them with crashing sounds.  
The gate on adamantine pillars hung,  
No force of man or heaven could break down  
Save Jove himself; so firmly is it built.  
Surmounting it an iron turret stands  
Of lofty height, on which a Fury sits,  
Tisiphone, with bloody cincture girt:  
Sleepless she guards the entrance day and night.  
Here groans are heard and strokes of cruel whips.  
And clanking chains by captives dragged around.  
Thus to the querying Trojan spoke his guide:  
The pure cannot set foot within those walls  
Where Radamanthus rules with iron hand;  
He hears the guilty story of the damned  
And meets out punishment; confessions now

Are forced from those who in the upper worlds,  
Rejoicing in an empty hope, put off  
Repentance till a sudden death dismissed  
With all their loads of crimes to Tartarus.  
Tisiphone insulting plies the scourge  
And brandishes her twirling snakes aloft,  
Then calls her sister furies: now the gate  
On creaking hinges backward flies; you see  
The kind of guardian there, a Hydra huge,  
With hundred gaping mouths, lies near on guard.  
Now Tartarus itself extends beneath the shades—  
A deep and dark abyss, in length as far  
As twice the distance from earth's central point  
To high Olympus: here the Titan youth,  
Ancient inhabitants of earth are found,  
Their monstrous bodies rolling in the deep,  
Hurled down and crushed by thunderbolts of Jove.  
Here the twin sons of Alous are seen—  
Gigantic forms. They dared to rend the heavens  
And thrust Jove out from his imperial realms,  
But failed in the attempt. Here writhes in pain  
Salmonea who strove to counterfit

Jove's thunder; in a four-horse chariot,  
He drove thro' Grecian cities, torch in hand,  
And claimed those honors which to God are due.  
Madman, to think Heaven's livery could be feigned,  
The inimitable lightnings and the clouds  
And prancing horn-hoofed steeds that there attend;  
But the Almighty Father from dense clouds  
Makes ready his swift thunder-bolt for him,  
(Not torches, he, nor smoky light of pine)  
And whirlwind-like beats the foul wretch to earth.  
And Tytan too, earth's foster parent, lies  
In this abyss profound: nine acres scarce  
Can furnish room for him; at length  
Is stretched his awful body;—on it perched  
An eagle sits and with his hooked beak  
Pecks the immortal liver rich with pain,  
Digs for his food and nestles in the breast  
While the re-knitting fibers grant no peace.  
Why should I call to mind Pirithous,  
And Ixion and Lapithas o'er whom  
Impending rocks hang loose: ever they seem  
To fall, yea even now: here we see spread

In royal luxury the banquet stores  
Before the very eyes of famished souls;  
Yet just beside a Fury is on guard,  
And keeps the thronging number from the feast;  
Fearful in look she chides with threatening tones.  
Here the blood-sprinkled fratricide is seen,  
And he who struck an aged parent down,  
The thieving lawyer whose sole thought had been  
To cheat his fellow-man, and he who broods  
On golden treasures, careless of the cry  
That neighboring poverty sends forth. Here wait  
The foul adulteress and the traitorous knave  
Who sold his country, turned his master's hand  
To gain forbidden wealth. Seek not to know  
Their various fortune and sharp punishment.  
Some roll a mighty rock; some tied to spokes  
Of circling wheels, forever spin around:  
Unhappy Theseus thus requits the gods.  
Had I a hundred tongues, a hundred mouths,  
A voice of iron, I could not unfold  
The various kinds of crime and punishment.

## GOLD.

What prize is that for which men strive so hard?  
Gold? Can it be this yellow glittering stuff,  
Another form of dust, so wins the heart,  
So steals an entrance to their every thought,  
And gives ambition wing! Yet, it is so.  
That shining grain can work a miracle,  
Nay many; it recalls dead dreams to life,  
Touches the sick and they rejoice in health,  
Makes the blank wilderness bloom like the rose,  
And scatters many blessings far and near.  
Hence doth man prize it so. Yet gold hath wrought  
The deeds of darkness; now it opes the cell  
And leaves the lawless free, now stays the arm  
Of outraged justice, wins the smiles of kings:  
Makes the strong tremble and the coward bold;  
Oft stoops the pure soul from its lofty height  
To worship this vile creature of the dust.

## VIA RECTA.

There is a way that seemeth to man right ;  
Yet it doth lead to evil ; one may find  
Upon the ruffled sea of human life,  
In our own age this ancient truth confirmed.  
Now see we those who launch their fragile bark  
Regardless of the winds, regarding not  
The warning voice of wise experience,  
That voice which speaks so truly unto them  
But falls in vain upon their foolish ear.  
Yes, vainly falls — they tempt the angry waves  
With flowing sail, go down and are no more.  
Wrecks find we all along life's trodden coast  
And wrecked by whom ? Let false opinion tell,  
And that pert judgment which young minds possess ;  
That fancy which so gaily paints our lives  
In time to come withdrawing from the gaze,  
By shading colors, what is best to know.



## THE PAST.

Oh, let me not recall the bitter past!  
The desert of my life lies hidden there:  
'Tis true some flowers bloomed, yet faded fast  
And left a sandy waste, dry, cold and bare.

Had I the choice, I would not live again,  
And all this human suffering undergo;  
Much better in the grave than among men  
Where one must count few friends and many a foe.

Then o'er that waste a darkening shadow cast,  
And let oblivion overwhelm it with the years  
That roll swiftly by, naught there should last  
Or merit human sympathy or tears.

Unless it be some struggle for the right,  
Some sinless act done by poor sinful man —  
All else envelope in the darkest night  
And one glad heart at least will say "amen."

## ONLY A STAR.

Only a star  
Shining afar  
In the blue depths of heaven!  
Long may it shine,  
A gift divine,  
Thro' murky shades of even.  
Emblem of hope  
To those who grope  
O'er devious ways of danger:  
In blackest night,  
A diamond bright,  
To cheer and light the stranger.  
Shine on, O star,  
And near and far  
Reflect thy heavenly splendor,  
And, tho' alone  
In sapphire zone,  
Give glory to thy maker.

## ILLUSIONS.

Are these illusions round us here —  
The birds' sweet song, the golden morn,  
And all the glories that adorn  
Woodland and meadow far and near?

Can it be true the budding rose  
And gray old oak, now decked in green,  
And snow-capped peak in grandeur seen  
Fail from the earth as melting snows?

Not so: with years we pass away,  
And leave the haunts of sun and shade,  
And all the beauty life has made;  
But they live on, nor know decay.

## PRAYER.

Sweet is thy influence, balm of wounded souls,  
Restoring angel to the fallen given,  
Whose voice the rage of passion oft controls  
And wins for troubled hearts, the peace of heaven.

## ENTRANCE TO HELL.

(VIRGIL, VI BOOK.)

ENVironed by a gloomy lake  
And darksome wilderness,  
A rocky cavern deep and wide  
Leads down to Tartarus.

Above no bird can wing its way  
Such exhalations rise—  
The foulness from this grimy mouth  
Steams up into the skies.

The rites performed, oblations made,  
Æneas waits his guide;  
And, lo, as morning sun returns  
How shakes the mountain side!

Yon woody heights are trembling now,  
And dogs thro' darkness howl—  
A goddess o'er the mountain top  
Nears to the entrance foul.

“Grasp tight thy sword and follow me,  
Yea follow close behind;  
Thy every power call on now,  
Be firm in heart and mind.”

“For into hell’s dark depths we go  
Where mortal has not trod,”  
Æneas boldly grasps his sword  
And follows at her nod.

Obscured beneath the shades of night,  
Thro’ gloomy homes of Dis  
And regions dismal, dark and drear  
In silence soon they pass;

As travellers wandering in a wood  
Hold on over lonesome ways  
’Neath the moon’s pale uncertain light  
When clouds overspread the skies.

Now in the very jaws of hell  
They meet revengeful Care  
And wan Disease and mourning Age  
And Famine everywhere.

They meet with Death’s half brother Sleep,  
And horrid Death hard by;  
Fraud, Force and Fear and Sorrow greet  
The strangers drawing nigh.

Centaurs and Hydras next appear,  
Briareus with hundred hands  
And Gorgons fierce and spectres bold—  
Chimera flaming stands.

Æneas, troubled at the sight  
Unsheathes his trusty steel,  
And on the mocking phantoms round  
Now eagle-like would wheel,

Had not the Sibyl interposed—  
She calms his rising fear  
By stating that these thronging forms  
Were but impassive air.

Now to dark Acheron they come  
Whose turbid waters pour  
A loathsome flood and bear aloft  
Unto the farther shore

The bark of Charon brimming o'er  
With freight of human ghosts;  
That hoary boatman fiery eyed  
Gives passage to the hosts.

A motley crowd press ever on  
Where others late have stood,  
And from the boatman beg a chance  
To cross the Stygian flood.

Into the boat the Sybil went  
And Æneas in turn—  
Soon were they landed on the shore  
Whence mortals ne'er return.

## THE MIDNIGHT HOUR.

The midnight hour was cold and mute  
As I wandered thro' the wood

Complaining of the woes of life

To the trees that round me stood  
Awakened from their peaceful sleep,

They cast on me a pitiful eye  
And bowed their heads and made reply:

Poor child of earth, we know thy grief  
And ask thee in prayer to find relief.

If thou wilt turn to God in prayer,  
Thy troubled heart will find comfort there:  
To things of earth thou wilt turn in vain  
As they cannot lessen a spirit's pain.

## THE MATERIALIST.

He stood beside the restless sea  
And watched its wild waves mount in glee  
And break with laughing sound  
While fading from the western sky  
The glow of eve began to die  
And shadows steal around.

Alone he stood and mused : Oh soul  
Why is it that thy fancies roll  
Like waves upon the sea,  
Now dashing 'gainst a barren hope  
Now sweeping thro' the boundless scope  
Of dark Eternity.

Mark how the sun's last feeble ray  
Melts in the ether far away  
Before the deepening gloom :  
So shall thy hope that now would soar  
Where pain and death are found no more,  
Be lost within the tomb.

Then leave my poor wracked brain in peace,  
Of future pain or pleasure cease  
To din into my ears;  
Let conscience laden with grave doubt  
And qualms untold at last find out  
Oblivion of its fears —



That sweet oblivion known to those  
Who moulder careless of life's woes,  
    Where gentle ivies creep,  
Forgetful of the stormy past,  
Resting their weary minds at last  
    In eternal sleep.

Why make me feel a keen remorse  
If nothing better, nothing worse  
    Than this life is thy goal.  
'Tis vain that conscience points within  
To hideous spots and stains of sin—  
    Vain is thy faith, oh soul!

Then grant this boon—oh set me free  
From toils of doubt and mystery,  
    Give o'er thy trust insane,  
And all this strife will have an end  
And peace like spell of night descend  
    To calm my troubled brain.

What! wilt thou scorn my heart's request  
And never grant this wished for rest,  
    But wrack me as before?  
Go, then, and prove what thou wouldst feel  
I'll stay thee not—this glittering steel  
    Will open wide the door.

Next morn a gastly corpse was found  
Wooed by the mocking waves that wound  
    Their foam wreathes o'er its hair,  
Upon the pallid face upturned  
Awakening beams of light discerned  
    An image of despair.

## HOPE.

How often comes a feeling of deep sadness  
    That human life is vain,  
When once is summed its moments brief of gladness  
    And long, long years of pain.

Fame tempted, high we tread on paths of glory,  
    For earthly honors live,  
Then marvel at the pleasure transitory  
    The best of these can give.

We look without, find all things empty, hollow,  
    Unworthy of our love,  
And turn with joy a Heavenly guide to follow  
    And hopes that end above.

## THE NEW COLUMBIAD.

## BOOK I.

○f him who first across the Western Main,  
Adventurous, sought in frail Hispanian bark  
The shores of Royal Ind o'er seas unknown,  
That man might sooner reach her genial clime  
And know this world of ours orbicular,  
Sing muse that oft the poet did inspire  
Grand deeds of heroes and of arms to verse,  
Now scaling heavenly heights, now venturing down  
The dark abyss in aid of epic song.  
Say how this genius bold of Genoa,  
Thro' many weary years in many lands,  
Scorned and dispised, won victory for truth  
And gained for man two other continents  
That still might feed the savage, worthless, wild,  
Had not an iron will and stern resolve,  
Combatted most by doubt and prejudice,  
Met every obstacle and overcame.  
And, thus declaring all his wondrous deeds,  
Thou mayest render justice unto him  
Whose name the western continents should bear;  
For recompense such as his acts deserve

Is not here found save in immortal verse.  
That much allow America to give  
In honor of her great discoverer  
And vouchsafe aid to these adventurous lines.  
Now o'er the deep the sable wing of night  
Had cast its shadow, and midst gathering gloom  
Three barks; now westward far from the Azores  
Full many a league, held their unfaltering course.  
Upon the foremost deck, fearless and calm,  
Amidst the timid sailors gathered round  
Columbus stood, watching the silent stars  
Steal one by one from out the depths of heaven  
His pathless way to light or guide perchance.  
Bowed was his form, the silvery hand of age  
Had touched his locks and left upon his brow  
Its furrowed traces, signs of toil and care.  
Majestical in size, in look and act,  
He bore about an air of dignity  
That challenged admiration from all men.  
And as he gazed upon the starry host  
Whose glittering orbs drove darkness from the deep,  
Astrologer he seemed whom destiny  
Would grant a gracious knowledge by her signs

Read in the stellar lights; yet far beyond  
Their brilliant course, on Him who gave them light  
And being were his thoughts, nor fixed alone  
In idle speculation, but deep moved  
By silent prayer and conscious helplessness,  
For well he knew that dangers were ahead  
Though all was peaceful on the sleeping sea.  
The long unfruitful voyage gave no hope  
As yet to anxious followers; how soon  
Their ill-restrained anger would compel  
Return to Spain could not be now divined.  
Anon he gazed upon the slackening sail  
Scarce filled by evening breeze and presently  
Boabdil caught his eye, Boabdil who  
Was chosen by impatient followers  
To seek an audience and declare their wish.  
Thinking this moment fit when all stood by  
To hear their captain speak, he thus began:  
“Beloved chief, thou knowest all our fears  
And hence must know the cause of our distress;  
For nigh a fortnight have our vessels’ prows  
Been pointing vainly to the Occident;  
The sharpest ken of mariner yet finds

Nor land nor sign thereof, but far and near  
Heaven's blue vault and a wide watery waste.  
And more than this: the compass ever true  
To point its needle toward the icy pole,  
Directing man when on the ocean wave  
How his craft may for any harbor steer,  
Now varies in allegiance; this is proof  
Of what tradition claims that in Atlantic seas  
Beyond those isles from which we late embarked  
A place is found where laws of nature cease,  
The utmost point upon this plain terrene.  
That reached, we're doomed to fall from off the earth  
Into that abyss spoken of by seers  
Where Hydra forms and monsters horrible  
Howl nightly through deep shade, where light and  
    peace  
Are strangers, home of fiends and gorgons dread.  
At thought of such a fate our blood runs cold.  
Oh captain, change thy purpose, we beseech,  
Tempt not too far the mercy of kind heaven  
That has already a sure sign vouchsafed  
Of danger imminent; let us give o'er  
This mad pursuit and homeward turn our sail."

He ended; to his speech Columbus thus:  
“Beloved Boabdil and companions dear,  
Your fears are known to me nor think that I  
Have lost compassion in my stern resolve  
Of finding western path to Indian lands.  
Well have I weighed the dangers of the course,  
Attempting what was ne’er conceived before.  
Long ere I launched upon Atlantic seas,  
Or had secured from Isabella ships,  
Or from her royal consort, Ferdinand,  
Commission to explore what may lie hid  
In Western hemisphere, I then foresaw  
That difficulty greater would be found  
In quelling false alarms or prejudice  
Than ills those daring mariners must bear  
Who venture far upon the Western seas.  
Just one of many instances to cite:  
When I approached the king of Portugal  
And to his royal councillors made known  
This plan of exploration, forthwith they:  
‘We cannot favor this, your rash design,  
Since it of sense or judgment savors nought.’  
‘Know thou,’ they said, ‘o’erarching skies will fall,

Crushing to death that daring mariner  
Who ventures close to the forbidden spot  
Where they with earth's extremist rim conjoin.  
We counsel thee to harbor saner thought  
And chide back reason to her native seat.'  
With these insulting words did they express  
What we have proven a lie; the sky above  
Rests not upon the earth or long ere this  
We would have reached that point fatal esteemed;  
Its arch deceptive to the sight alone,  
Betokens of this world sphericity;  
Hence as we farther sail it e'er recedes  
Like miraged oases in desert lands  
Before the eager gaze of wanderers.  
So then we might continue till the shore  
Whence we have come, return unto our gaze.  
And now the present matter to explain:  
Tis true the compass fails, yet why alarm?  
Had we assurance beyond all doubt  
That on all seas in every latitude  
Invariably true it would remain?  
And surely other portents would appear  
Did nature mean a surcease of her works;



Yet there are none; the golden sunlight falls  
As it is wont from the great globe beyond  
Whose office is to cheer the earth with day;  
Morn bright and rosy as the primal beams  
E'er made, and 'customed eve succeeds.  
Take courage, then, companions of my lot,  
Fear not while there is yet no cause of fear.  
What would they say in Spain did we return?  
Forgetful of all else, victims of dread,  
Yielding to cowardice, ignoble end  
To what may prove the grandest enterprize  
E'er dreamed by mariner should we but on,  
Regardless of misgivings timorous.  
Kind Isabella, she whose wealth has manned  
And fitted out these venturous barks of ours,  
What condemnation would she not pronounce  
On dastard act of turning now our sail!  
No, we will never undergo the shame  
Such base intent would bring, rather should we  
Suffer our lifeless bodies wafted to the strand  
Of far off Palos shipwrecked to be seen,  
Than be tame victims to this coward fear.  
But see! the moon's disk o'er the water's edge

Peers out triumphant, marking the pale dawn  
Of the nocturnal day ; and as her silver veil  
Hangs tremulous on the ocean's ruffled brow  
Robbing the darkness of his ugly mien ;  
So may those holy offices that now  
Are ushered by the joyful vesper bell  
Recall our wandering courage, make us brave  
And cheer with hope our darkened, devious path."   
Thus kindly spoke their captain and his words  
Finding an easy entrance to their hearts  
Soothed many a troubled mind ; descend they now  
To evening prayer, and o'er the waters far,  
The choired voice in wavy volume floats,  
Hymning to God the praise from mortals due.





LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 015 863 724 8